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"AFTER THE SHOWER"
By GEORGE INNESS, JR.

The Art of George Inness, Jr.

By ANNE LOUISE BOOTH

A COLLECTION of paintings by George Inness, Jr., will be on exhibition at the American Art Gallery during December and should command the attention of collectors and connoisseurs who delight in exquisite landscapes. The impression gains among critics that in the work of the elder Inness and his contemporaries of the Hudson River School there abided something truly individual and national. As the rightful heir to their traditions and methods George Inness, Jr., occupies an important position in the history of the evolution of the American school for he is carrying forward what has been so well begun, building upon a foundation

of assuredly sound principles a new art radiant with his own genius.

There are disadvantages connected with being the son of a great man, not the least of which is the constant embarrassment of odious comparison. This is complicated by the fact that no one can truly estimate works of contemporary art. The most profound of critics is blinded by the glory of a great name and the most independent yet lacks the courage to recognize equal aesthetic values where established market values differ widely. Thus an equally gifted father and son could not be expected to rank equally until the great leveller had made equal their estate.

"BY THE POND"
By GEORGE INNESS, JR.



That George Inness, Jr., paints like his father cannot be ignored or denied. That this is as natural and unavoidable as inherited mental and physical resemblances is at once apparent, for his pictures are not weak reflections of another's genius, but sincere and convincing expressions of his own. They have an individuality of color and handling readily recognizable to the discerning who accord his works high rank upon their own merits.

Never has landscape art produced anything of greater sublimity than the Inness style. Its contemplative serenity might almost be termed a devotional quality so strongly does it suggest the triumphant tranquillity of the "everlasting aye." "The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silent before Him." Its curtains are the mists of space and distance, its dome

the sky and its altars the rock bound hills. This is what we feel instinctively and subconsciously upon beholding the wonderfully luminous and atmospheric panoramas of meadow, hilltop, cloudland, and stream that the exhibition under consideration presents. In every canvas, back of the beauty of color, the charm of dreamy light and trembling air, broods that eternal calm of nature which is so like "The Peace of God which passeth all understanding."

The remote suggestion which constitutes one of the charms of Corot is present also in all of the works of George Inness, Jr. None of his landscapes are studies of things near at hand. They begin at a considerable distance from the observer and stretch away into fascinating mysteries of far-off hills or woods or cloud-draped horizons. There is a basis in our physical

*"SPRINGTIME"*

By GEORGE
INNESS, JR.

make-up perhaps for the enjoyment which we feel in such pictures. It has been asserted that the human eye is still adjusted to the conditions of an ancestry which roamed a wide world and looked afar. We seem to see with less eye strain out over the prospect of nature than when gazing at things close at hand. Body, mind and spirit seem to relax with the decreasing tension of vision as we gaze away toward the mysterious distance. This in some degree may account for the soothing and pleasing effect of the landscapes of Corot and the elder and younger Inness as well as of a few other cotemporary poet

painters, an effect similar to that produced by getting out into the open.

There is, however, sometimes a dramatic note in the works of George Inness, Jr., a living symbol bodying forth the spirit of the scene, emphasizing its message in pose or expression. Such a picture is "The White Cow," a remarkable canvas in which the title role is assumed by a tiny figure well in the distance, yet so effectively placed that we observe it first and last and feel that it holds the center of the stage. A meadow of indescribably rich and luscious green occupies the foreground with a still, clear pond at one side. At the back of the can-

vas is a straggling hedge of trees and brush through which the white cow has evidently just emerged, to gaze upon the promised land spread out before her in sweet bewilderment at such profusion. The fatness of the land in summer, its absolute adequacy to all creature comforts has not been better expressed and yet the picture is not in the least theatrical. Its poetic breadth of handling prevents that, for the cow is a mere spot of white and the grass of the meadow and dark glassy surface of the pool lie in dreamy light and brooding shadow while beyond and above is a luminous sky with broken and beautiful clouds.

Similar in respect to the significance given a living symbol is "Rising Mists," a sheep picture with the golden toned, woolly flocks descending a grey hillside pasture, whose pale, faded grasses suggest late summer or early fall. Beyond are the outlines of a distant mountain and the suggestion of the rising mists, trailing and following the flock. One of the sheep in the foreground lifts his head as though to sniff ominously a coming change of weather. Another sheep picture, "Leaving the Barn," is a bit unusual as presenting an interior. It is, however, admirably handled and the sunlit and breezy outdoors is suggested by the light which streams in from outside.

"By the Pond" is a work of nice quality with a suggestion of Corot in the distant red roof. The sky is dark-toned with heavy clouds and strong evening light. The figure on the bank adds to the contemplative quality of this rich but quiet and harmonious composition and the bare tree in the foreground gives a somewhat dramatic touch. "After the Shower" is a bit of more direct painting than is usual with this artist or his school. It is notable for lovely contrasting effects of color and for the greater significance given to the objects which compose it. Though a poetic picture, light and atmosphere are here balanced in interest by the aspect of the objects themselves. The contrast of tall dark

evergreens and spreading shade tree of lighter toned foliage, the blue of the waters, the soft, rich red of the walls of the house at the right, the two white figures in the sunlight passing by the spreading tree at the left, are all rather more clearly defined and presented more for their own sake than is usual with an Inness.

"Springtime" is likewise rather more direct than the majority of this artist's works. It is a most beautiful sylvan study and while some might find it less charming for not being so characteristic, others might find greater delight in a canvas which bespeaks the creator's versatility and serves to add the interest of contrast. "Red Sun" might easily be mistaken for a work of the elder Inness, recalling as it does many of his sunset studies. Rosy mists and fairyland reflections give an unearthly charm to a scene of sunset gleaming redly through a cloud veil. The water beneath might be a canal which is near Montclair and has been frequently painted by Inness.

A work to live with is "Over the Meadows," with its marshy foreground, and great extent of sky. In the distance are scattered trees and the houses of a village, a tall smoking chimney suggesting that it may be a New England factory town. This little settlement, however, gains enchantment from its remoteness, the veil of distance hiding all that is sordid and leaving only that which is poetic and pleasing. A very dramatic picture of one of the unusual aspects of nature is "After the Snow Squall." A vivid sun breaks through a blue black cloud wall, the rose and golden tones at one side contrasting sharply with the inky darkness of the other. Below the fresh young green of the spring meadow lies powdered by the driven sleet-like snow. It is the kind of a picture which presages a rainbow and while none appears as yet in the sky we feel that prismatic condition of the atmosphere which will shortly produce one.